

Chairmans Report 2021/22

Culmington Parish Council resumed monthly meetings in May 2021 despite the Covid epidemic still continuing and I would like to thank all the councillors and the Clerk for attending these meetings when there was still a great deal of uncertainty as to how safe it was to meet in groups.

Heather Coonick has now completed her first year as Clerk and I am pleased to say that she has become an invaluable member of our Parish Council. As Clerk to two other Parish Councils she has brought forward ideas for collaboration and knowledge which I am sure is going to help guide us through the coming year.

We have a new Environmental Maintenance Officer Mr Dave Lewis who has been active throughout the Parish. His previous position with Kier has put him in good stead for carrying out the maintenance work required. He is carrying out regular checks on drainage ditches, grass cutting, footbridge maintenance etc. for which the parish council is getting excellent feedback from parishioners.

Jeff Williams and his team of volunteers are carrying out their work repairing the footpaths of our Parish. I must say that their work is improving access throughout the parish and with lockdown encouraging more people to visit the countryside visitors to the Parish are having a much better experience.

The Flood Action group continues to monitor the drains and report problems to the relevant agencies. The Parish Council has undertaken to desilt the Seifton Brook in Seifton Lane which was carried out in July 2021. Since then there has been one flood where there was minor overflowing which proved that the project is worth continuing with and to that end during the summer the Parish Council will carry out the second phase of desilting. It is worth noting that the planned installation of the bypass pipe would probably have stopped any overflow and is a scheme which should be looked at again.

There have been planning issues caused again by the confusion over the different local plans in the Seifton area. Even though the Parish Council has explained clearly the issues to the Shropshire Council Planning department they still do not appear to understand that Culmington is Open Countryside. I

hope that during this coming year that agreement can be found to alter the parish boundary to take away this anomaly

The Parish Council have recently had meetings with the local policing team to establish what is causing concerns within the community and several issues have and are being dealt with. We are also developing relationships with the Environment Agency to be in a better position to deal with any environmental issues as and when they arise.

Parish Council meetings will be held in the Village Hall on the first Tuesday of every month except for August and December. Parishioners are invited to attend and raise any concerns before the meetings start, or, with regard to agenda items, are given the opportunity to comment during the meeting itself. Condensed Minutes are published in Ripples and are also available on the website.

Thank you once again for your efforts in making time to attend these meetings and having a say in how our community is being run.

Corvedale Division

Annual Report to Parishes 2021/22

Shropshire Unitary Councillor

Cecilia Motley

It is a relief to be finally emerging from the Covid pandemic which has had such a disruptive effect on so many in our community over the last two years. Let us hope we can all withstand any future outbreaks and I hope everyone who is eligible is taking up the offer of another booster jab.

It has really been a strange year; first covid and then the horrific events in Ukraine, together with unexpected fuel cost increases and climbing inflation. Shropshire Council is working hard to roll out the Government's Council Tax rebate programme of £150 to eligible households with approximately £10m rebated across 65,000 households throughout the county.

The Council has been supporting the Homes for Ukraine programme and we have set up a 'one stop shop' web page: [Homes for Ukraine | Shropshire](https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/homes-for-ukraine). To date 434 Ukrainian individuals are due to come to Shropshire with 155 individuals having already arrived. Our housing officers have been working to organise payments, DBS checks, property checks and safeguarding checks as well as seeking school places and GP practices through the CCG. Corvedale residents and parishes are opening their homes to Ukrainian guests as well. A hub to welcome Ukrainian nationals has been set up in Shrewsbury and Ludlow is also working to set up a similar reception centre.

We haven't had much luck with Government funding over the year. The local government financial settlement was disappointing as, having promised a three-year funding programme it reverted to a one year rollover budget. The settlement still failed to recognise the huge burden that is placed on large rural authorities like ours by the demands of social care. Over the period of the covid pandemic the number of children requiring our care has increased to over 600. Despite the government's introduction in April of the National Insurance surcharge to pay for health and social care we know that very little of the funding raised will be heading into local authority social care services. Once again this puts our finances under serious strain.

The first two rounds of the Levelling Up Fund did not help Shropshire either. We put in bids (strongly supported by our MPs) for three excellent projects, including one in Craven Arms. All of them were rejected. We then applied for the big public transport fund, the Bus Strategy Improvement Plan. We believed we had put in an excellent and imaginative application to enable us to run a truly county-wide public transport service and - along with all our neighbouring rural authority areas – were once again rejected. Since then together with our Passenger Transport manager I had the opportunity of meeting the Transport Minister to explain our plans to her and she has strongly encouraged us to reapply in the next funding round which comes in July. Hopefully we will be third time lucky.

Another Government initiative which is likely to affect us is County Deals, whereby local authorities are encouraged to work closely together and potentially elect a mayor or governor to represent them, as in the city regions. We are unsure of the benefits of this in Shropshire as we are such a large county already, but we will certainly look at options for how to do this at maximum benefit to the county.

Closer to home one of my portfolio responsibilities is the Community Governance Review, involving the Town and Parish Councils reviewing their boundaries and considering the case either for merging with neighbouring parish councils or for straightening out anomalies in some of the boundaries. The other is a more official review by the Local Government Boundary Commission, asking us to make recommendations for changes to the Council's Divisional Boundaries. The timing on this is strictly controlled – we must start the review process in October 2022 to be completed and signed off by Parliament in 2023. No pressure there then! It means that we will have to stop work on the Governance Review to concentrate on the divisional boundaries but by then we should have a good idea of where the areas of difficulty lie. Nevertheless, it will take a lot of time in the ensuing months. I am really grateful to all the Corvedale parishes for looking very closely at this and coming up with some constructive suggestions for their own boundaries.

Corvedale parishes have been working hard on plans for traffic calming measures over the last year including getting VAS signs set up and considering particular calming measures to slow traffic speeds on our very busy B roads, which are so often used as diversionary routes when the A49 is under repair/resurfacing etc. The Cabinet is meeting with the Police and Crime

Commissioner and the new Chief Constable later in May and I will take the opportunity to press the case for funding for traffic calming measures for the parishes since this is such a widespread problem.

On the subject of highways, I hope you have seen improvements in the work to reduce the pothole problem in the county. We now have a full complement of local traffic engineers and a new way of reporting problems – Fix My Street – is being rolled out which is a far speedier and more responsive tool than the My Shropshire app which was extremely slow. There is also more resource going into sorting out the many clogged and damaged road drains which cause localised flooding and damage to the roads and lanes.

Once again this year the Corvedale has done a great job in mitigating flooding through the Flood Action Groups and I am delighted to have been asked to act as the flood champion for the south of Shropshire. I have since recruited Dan Thomas, Member for Much Wenlock as another champion for the south east of the county.

Finally, the new recycling wheelie bin with a purple top is being rolled out now in the south of the county. If you haven't already applied, there is still time to do so on the Council website. This bin will take all the bottles, plastic, tins etc which currently go into the recycling boxes. The blue bag will still take newspapers and cardboard. You don't have to return your old recycling boxes. I'm going to use mine to grow tomatoes...

As ever, please don't hesitate to let me know if you have a problem with the Council services that I cazzn help with.

Cllr Cecilia Motley

Corvedale Division Councillor, Shropshire Council

Portfolio Holder Communities, Place, Culture Leisure Tourism & Transport

May 2022

Footpath Group Report

We have 4 active members who attend when they can.

Andrew Pike, Peter Lines, John Rutherford plus Carol Byng

Since last I gave a report we have:

Culmington :-

Replaced 3 footpath gates with self-closing Bridleway gates Norton Farm after a complaint they were being left open (Shrewsbury Ramblers + David Hardwick)

After Path Diversion in Medley Park added gate and 5 Stiles (Scouts and Shrewsbury Ramblers assisting)

After path Diversion to match OS map on Shotwood Bank we added stile and refurbished another

Added two hooped gates beyond the Ford up to Shotwood bank after gates left open.

Cut Bridleway from Tower House to Culmington

Reset Footbeds on 5 stiles

Tarmac on Footbridge at Ford, Seifton Lane

Replaced stile on Vernolds Common

To Do:-

Issue with locked gate and blocked Bridleway Norton Farm to be addressed. (Install B/W gate)

Refurbish stiles south of Village Hall to Burley

Finger Post Burley

Cut Bridleway

Stanton Lacy :-

Replaced footbeds on 2 Stiles and added new plank and Stile to Bridge on Mr Teague's land

Replaced gate on Thriftwicket Lane

Onibury :-

With Shrewsbury Ramblers –

Replaced Gate with Stile, installed new bridge, replaced gate post, installed and replaced 5 stiles and another Bridge from Vernolds Common to Onibury.

All very quiet, at the moment, as personnel become available. Andrew Pike still walking paths and reporting back. **Would request walkers contact me with issues before putting in complaint to Council.**

Culmington Parish Council

Annual General Meeting 3rd May 2022

Flood Action Group – Report:

2021 has been a year in which we have been fortunate when other communities around us have flooded, but acts as a reminder of the ever present threat of flooding and the need to continue to do more to try to reduce the impact on homes in our parish.

The Flood Action Group continues to meet on Zoom facilitated by The National Flood Forum who are a great support to the group and to many other groups within the County. We also continue to have Multi agency meetings to try to keep lines of communication open between the community and other agencies in the hope that Culmington can continue to find solutions to reduce the impact of any future flooding. It has been a year of slow progress and at times frustrating. Shropshire Council unfortunately were unsuccessful in their bid for funding from the Innovation Fund and that has quite an impact on what monies are available for work within the County, in particular in small rural communities such as ours.

However we will continue to strive to find ways of progressing areas of work where we are able and are grateful to all the Flood Action Group members for their time and efforts over the past twelve months. Also to the Parish Council as always for their support and Cllr Cecilia Motley in particular for agreeing to be an advocate for flooding within the Council, keeping that conversation live in the wider arena. Culmington Flood Action Group continues to be a member of the wider Shropshire Flood Forum with Jayne Disley and Peter Lines attending meetings currently once a month. Other groups within Shropshire share the same problems and frustrations as do groups in other areas of the country and listening to each other and sharing knowledge is one of the positive ways we can try to make a difference and get our voices heard.

2022 we hope will be a more normal year when we can go back to some face to face meetings and make some real progress. We understand there are still some monies available for some work within Culmington and those conversations will be ongoing over the next few months as well as continued requests for a better regime of drain clearing and maintenance.

Hugh Disley - Chair: Culmington Flood Action Group